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## "Easter The First"

BY DAISY D. STEPHENSON

"EASTER vacation at timberline! Oh, Bab, you have our sympathy!" Ernestine Arnold spoke feelingly for the trio of girls who had dropped in to interview their favorite, and to learn what they considered the harrowing details. Barbara Wells opened blue eyes wide, and with her usual efficiency, endeavored to finish packing while correcting false impressions.

"But you're wasting perfectly good sympathy," she protested warmly. "I don't need it, thank you. I'm going to have a beautiful time with Marian up there, and decide whether I'd like being a teacher. I'm so glad mother can have this surprise outing with father in California, that if it would relieve her mind any, I'd light out for Greenland instead of Evergreen."

A spontaneous giggle rewarded this Barbara-ism, as sister Marian was wont to refer to similar expressions of enthusiasm from the youngest.

"You're perfectly welcome to come and stay at our house," declared Leona Byers, adding with a mischievous gleam, "for you are positively the most conscientious dishwasher I ever laid eyes on!"

"Bring your suitcase right home with me, and I'll treat you like 'Curly-locks!'" bribed sprightly Florence Eaton. "And the whole family will give me a rousing vote of thanks for bringing you!"

Barbara relinquished her attempt to squeeze a pair of boots into a space that would have cramped mere gloves, and hugged Florence gratefully.

"We'll divide you into thirds, Bab, if you'll give up your expedition to the polar regions," coaxed Ernestine. "That high life may not agree with you. Just see how unanimous we are! Everybody wants a helping of you!"

Barbara beamed on them affectionately, then practically appealed to Florence as the plumpiest one present. "If you'll just stand on this apoplectic suitcase," she begged, "we'll adjourn below. The folks had to take an early train and mine does not go till spang noon." She dimpled as she explained to her sympathizers, "One solitary train a day up that canyon, and

hardly that if a blizzard starts first!"

"Oh, Bab!" groaned Leona, the thin, who felt chilly from the time of the first frost till the May bees buzzed. "That mining camp will be as bad as living among Eskimos! You told us Marian didn't like it. Foreigners and riff-raff, I suppose."

"But Marian's different," reminded Barbara, ushering them below. "She's reserved and sort of clam-ish, while I'm just naturally clannish! I just know there are

close neighbors. So don't waste any sorrys on me, girls," she urged brightly. "It's a novel adventure, and I'm a snow-bird, anyway. Just think of being where men dig precious metals! As long as I've lived out west I've never had a bowing acquaintance with a silver or gold mine! I feel positively rich already!"

The girls continued to be dubious even over that Barmecide inducement, and Barbara departed amid a babel of reminders, promising to send an S. O. S. if her friends could do anything to cheer her sojourn in exile.

The tedious winding trip up the wintry canyon did not discourage her in the least. There were few passengers at that season, but Barbara knew them all before she reached her eagle's eyrie destination. It developed that Mrs. Crofton, a charming companion who had chosen the river side of the little car with Bab, was also bound for the camp. Her handsome fur coat and her unusually refined appearance and attractive manner would have roused anyone's curiosity as to the reason for her journey to that Alpine nook in early April. But Barbara's eager interest in humanity always eclipsed what slight native curiosity she possessed. She only knew that Mrs. Crofton had traveled extensively after serving her country overseas; that she was alone in the world, and therefore to be pitied; friendly, and therefore to be loved.

"I shall expect to see more of you," Mrs. Crofton observed as the little train neared the lonely station at dark. "Surely Evergreen is not such a metropolis that I can't find you," she smiled.

Barbara warmly assured her that their friendship must be continued. She was excitedly collecting her luggage and snatching a farewell

word with a young girl bound for the next station. "Be sure and write me if you need any extra songs or poems for your Easter program," Barbara reminded the rancher's daughter, who thanked her with shy gratitude. "I brought along a whole volume of material in case my sister was not supplied. I simply dote on drilling children!" confided Barbara, as the plucky dwarf engine halted, puffing and congratulating itself that it had accom-



"SHE EXPLAINED NAIVELY TO THE ENTIRE CAMP,  
'BUDDY CAME A PURPOSE TO OUR EASTER PROGRAND!'"

Drawing by Marjorie Terry Chellis

nice people up there."

Ernestine regarded her fondly. "Just so there are 'human beans' about for Bab to cultivate," she told the rest, "she'd be happy anywhere from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand!"

Barbara flushed but accepted the friendly impeachment without a protest. "I haven't a single hermit bone in all my two hundred and seven," she confessed frankly. "Seems to me the nicest thing in the world would be to have lots of



plished the stiffest grade and might now relax. "Oh, it's snowing!" exclaimed Barbara from the vestibule. "And oh, there's Marian!"

"I wonder who she is," murmured Marian after the sisters had boarded the ancient 'bus for the camp boarding house. "I noticed a lively stable sleigh, so she must have been expected. Oh, Bab, chile!" the dignified teacher nestled closer hungrily, "it's so good to have a bit of home up here in this forsaken place! It seems eons since I left civilization to experiment on young mountaineers." A deep sigh; "And I'll tell the school board I've bushels of experience!" They had now reached a rambling frame house and Barbara was ushered into a little room, heated by a drum-shaped stove. "What on earth you're to do with yourself, Babie, while I earn my salary teaching wiggly little may-be Americans—"

"I've appointed myself your valuable assistant!" interrupted Barbara gaily. "I'll teach them songs and games, and I want to visit Sunday school tomorrow to get in on the Easter drilling."

Marian, shaking the snow from her toque, stared blankly. "Bab Wells! Where do you think you are?" she scolded gently. "If there's such a thing in this jumping off place, I haven't heard of it."

It was Barbara's turn to stare. "B-but I didn't suppose there was any place in Columbia minus a Sunday School!" she addressed the universe at large. Ruefully she inquired, "Is it the altitude? Does it affect folks' religion?"

"After you get a daylight view of camp and meet some of the inhabitants thereof, you'll understand," Marian replied wearily, quoting with a shrug, "'Abandon hope all ye who enter here!'"

But Barbara was not convinced. She was one of those ambitious souls who believe that though there may be a limit to their achievement, there is none to their attempt. She had Marian unseated in the first tilt. "Even if there's no church, there's a school house." She hesitated a second. "Didn't you ever think of starting a Sunday School, sister? You always had a class at home."

"Mercy, Bab!" Marian flung up her hands in comic dismay. "You give me a felon feeling! I'm no Joan of Arc, you know, and I have my hands full with the little imps five days a week." She looked more serious at realizing her sunny Bab's perturbation. "If anyone can make a dent in this glacial formation," she slipped an arm about the downcast one, "it's you, oh little neighbor to all!" she finished whimsically.

The cook's lively tattoo on a tin pan now summoned the boarders to "Come and get it," and Barbara's spirits bobbed up cheerfully. Marian could not resist whispering as they entered the noisy dining room, "Now you'll see what congenial company we have!" The curious glances and subdued silence that greeted the girls was rather embarrassing, but at Barbara's friendly inclusive greeting, the tableful

## The Easter Lily

BY ANNA NELSON REED

THE lily is shaped like a bell,  
A silver bell, with a golden tongue;  
Many and many a time it has rung  
For it has a story to tell,—  
A tale for the Spring o' the year;  
Life! Glad Life! is the message it rings,  
The Easter tidings of joy it brings,—  
Listen, and you may hear!

thawed to normal quickly. Barbara at once made welcome overtures to a flax-haired little girl across the table, and soon entered into a spirited conversation with "Globe" Trotter, a bronzed giant of a fellow at her left.

"Sho now, Miss Wells, you mean to tell me you never seen a tame bear?" Trotter's laugh rose above the hubbub. "We'll see that you get acquainted with Bub first thing tomorrow, won't we, Lily May?" The little girl wiggled delightedly. "Unless Mrs. Halloran'll let us invite the cub in to show off tonight," he addressed the stout landlady with twinkling eyes.

To Marian's evident relief Mrs. Halloran replied in the negative. "The laddeen ain't so well tonight," she explained to the suddenly attentive table. There were awkward expressions of concern and Barbara was touched by the consideration which prompted these rough men to lower their voices and tip-toe away later. Of course Barbara could not rest until Lily May had escorted her to a tiny room where Timmie spent the weary days,—a thin patient scrap of a Kewpie. Barbara smiled into the grave eyes that seemed so poignantly wistful, then knelt by the cot while he cuddled into her arms like a lonesome kitten.

When Mrs. Halloran entered to make her lamb comfortable for the night she waited unobserved. "Of course you'll have Easter eggs, green and pink!" Barbara was assuring the wide-eyed kiddies. "I'll speak to the Bunny myself. He'll put Evergreen on his route forever after, you'll see! And we'll have a private entertainment of our own if nobody else cares. Why, Lily May almost knows a piece already! Say it, dear, and I'll help you."

With conscious pride Lily May repeated the simple lines that opened a vista in fairyland to her imaginative little soul! "When the brooklets dance and play,  
When the buds unfold each day,  
When we hear the merry note  
From the happy blue-bird's throat;  
When the dainty blossoms peep,  
Waking from their winter sleep,  
That's the joy time of the year—  
Gladsome Easter Day is near!"

Timmie clung to Barbara eagerly. "Do you have pretties like them at home?" he queried, adding with satisfaction, "I saw some robins last summer. But they don't like it here. I wish God would give them more feathers," he sighed. "There's just tar birds up in the rocks."

Barbara looked puzzled, and Lily May hastened to explain. "He means ptarmug-ins. And we only have—enemies," she went on shyly. "You know, little fuzzy cups that ain't afraid of the snow."

"Oh, I love anemones!" nodded Barbara with her winning smile. As she joined Marian, who had been marking papers, there was a lump in her throat and resolution in her eye. "Oh, sister, if all the kiddies here are as starved for beauty, they're going to have a big taste if I can manage it! Why, they don't even know the blue-bird!" A bit of a quotation flashed into her memory. "Ah, you are a poem of April that God has endowed with wings!" She was settling herself with writing pad and pen. "Can't sleep a wink till I get something out of my system. Ernestine's father is on the staff at the Children's Hospital," was the sole explanation she vouchsafed an interested Marian, "and Florence's uncle is a florist." Pen poised, she was momentarily dazzled by other visions. With a mysterious smile she added to herself, "And Leona can hop, hop to the candy shop later. I'm glad I haven't spent my allowance."

"Why, The Craggs is all lighted up!" exclaimed Marian, peering into the night when she lowered the shades. "Nobody's lived there since old Mr. Hastings died. He was owner of the Silver Queen and built a summer home over on that rocky point."

Barbara glanced idly in the direction designated. "Maybe it's haunted," she said with a twinkle. Marian gave her back her smile.

"If it is, you'll be making friends with the spooks!" she prophesied merrily. Just before she dropped off to sleep, lulled by Boreas' rude serenade, Barbara wondered whether her charming traveling companion had anything to do with the illumination at The Craggs.

She was not long in doubt. The next morning, a bright cold Sabbath, Barbara was outdoors, laughing heartily over the antics of Bub, the cub. "Now show us where you're hungry," ordered proud Lily May. The brown bear with a comical grunt, essayed a mournful expression and rubbed his round stomach.

"Please may I come in?" The lilting voice sent Barbara flying to greet Mrs. Crofton who with her graciousness and tact, was soon on friendly terms with all present, including Bubby whose heart she won along the proverbial old route. "How lucky that I happened to have the cake of chocolate in my pocket!" laughed Mrs. Crofton with vast satisfaction. "You must come right in and meet Timmie," declared Barbara, piloting the caller indoors, "and Marian, of course."

"I see whéré the old Silver Queen sits up and takes notice, with that boss on the job," Globe Trotter remarked during the interested discussion at dinner. It had developed that Mrs. Crofton was old

(Continued on p. 125)





### Easter Praise

BY KATE W. HAMILTON

**R**ING out, O Easter bells, your praise,  
O human voices sing,  
Till all shall hear, this day of days,  
The tidings that you bring!  
The golden gates of heaven swing wide,  
The night of earth is o'er;

He lives again, the Christ who died,  
He lives forevermore!  
O lilies fair, O voices sweet,  
Your choicest treasures lay  
In bloom and music at his feet  
This happy Easter day.

### The Quitter

BY HELEN ELMIRA WAITE

**"S**PRING to the right of them;  
Spring to the left of them;  
Spring to the front of them,"

Alicia paraphrased as, in company with Lucile White and Hilda Marsh, she came down the school steps.

"It's apt, all right," agreed Lucile, "Um, but it's good to be out! What do you to say to a violet hunt?"

Hilda nodded, but Alicia shook her head regretfully. "Sorry; I can't. I've got to go for my music lesson now."

"Oh!" said Lucile. "But I forgot—you enjoy 'em, 'Licia. Well, good luck! We'll bring you some if we get any."

"What? Some luck? Thanks," smiled Alicia, but as she turned toward Miss Halsey's home, her steps lagged. Her paraphrase *had* been apt: If she looked to the left, there were orchards at the height of their beauty; at the right was the stately Allen lilac-hedge just breaking into royal bloom. Ahead of her the streets were strewn with rosy maple blossoms, and she knew, without looking, that be-

hind her was the tempting woods into which her companions had disappeared. Alicia sighed. Usually she did enjoy the prospect of her music-lesson, but somehow today she regretted the time spent inside.

Perhaps she had spring-fever; whatever it was, for the first time since she had grown old enough to have an appreciation of music, she found the lesson irksome. For the better part of half an hour her fingers traveled listlessly over the keys. Then a gay little breeze came dancing in at the open window and Alicia ended the "Spring-Song" with one fierce crash.

"Oh! My dear!" exclaimed little Miss Halsey, wincing at the discord, "What is the trouble today? You don't play that 'Spring' nearly as well as you did a fortnight ago, when you'd just begun it."

"I don't know," said Alicia helplessly, "I guess I must just be tired of music."

Miss Halsey, to whom music was the most beautiful thing on earth, looked shocked and hurt.

"I don't know what the matter is," Alicia went on, "only—I can't seem to play any more. My fingers seem to get

all tangled. Haven't you noticed it?"

"Yes," Miss Halsey admitted reluctantly.

"So I've decided not to play at the recital next month."

"But my dear! You don't mean it! I've depended on you!" cried the little music-teacher.

But Alicia only shook her head. "I can't, Miss Halsey! I'm sorry," she added as she saw the grieved look in her teacher's eyes, "truly I am, but I just *can't*!"

Alicia walked home very slowly. She didn't like to remember the look on Miss Halsey's face, but she couldn't play. Somehow when she did she felt like screaming.

She didn't go in the house at once. Instead she went on through the orchard, gathering loose petals on her soft hair, on down to the broad sloping meadow, where, beside a group of willows, ran a little brook.

It was very peaceful there. The sun shone through a haze, the little breeze was warm and fragrant, the grass was very green. A little bird sat in a tree, and the brook was very happy. Alicia sat down and put her fingers in the water. She wasn't restless now.

She must tell her family of course. They would be disappointed, but it was David who would be most disappointed of all. David had cheered her over more than one stony place, and now she was going to give up. She could almost see the hurt look on his face.

Alicia selected a moment when the whole family was together to tell them her decision in regard to the musical.

"But my dear!" protested her mother, "of course you must play! Miss Halsey told me herself she was counting on you, and Aunt Sophie wrote she was coming on to hear you!"

"Aren't you feeling well, Alicia?" demanded Mr. Gordon with a frown.

"Yes, Daddy. It's only that my fingers won't play."

"If you are perfectly well," he announced decidedly, "*you'll play*."

But again Alicia shook her head. "Oh," she pleaded, "*won't* you understand? I can't! I don't know why, but I just can't!"

"I didn't know you were a quitter!" This was Bob's scornful contribution to the conversation.

"After all," said David quietly, "I don't believe 'Licia's not playing will matter very much. Of course, *we'll* be disappointed, but Miss Halsey has so many other pupils I don't think it will affect the success of the recital one way or the other."

Alicia stared at him. So did Bob. "Huh?" said the latter, "Oh!"

Relieved from practicing, Alicia spent most of her spare moments in the meadow, which grew more beautiful every day. Rain had filled the brook, and set the grass growing, and Alicia discovered the birds were building a nest.

"I don't understand Alicia at all!" complained Mrs. Gordon to her eldest son,



"It's so strange! She hasn't touched the piano for a week!"

"But I catch her humming that 'Spring-Song' pretty often," chuckled David, "oh, 'Licia's all right! Give her time!"

But if Mrs. Gordon didn't understand Alicia, Alicia was far from understanding David. Instead of being almost as grieved as Miss Halsey, as she had expected, he was cheerful in the extreme.

She continued aloof from the piano until one night when she and David were alone. He had declined an invitation to dinner on the excuse of a headache, and Alicia offered to stay with him.

"Is there anything I can do?" she asked anxiously.

"No, I don't think so, thanks. Yes there is too, only you probably wouldn't want to do it."

"Oh, yes I would!" cried Alicia rashly, "what is it?"

"Well—I'd like a little music."

Quietly Alicia went to the piano. The room was dark, and as strain after strain of Grieg's "Spring" came from her fingers, her brother smiled to himself. Alicia herself was surprised, and at first delighted, at her returned ability to play smoothly. Then the thought that she no longer had a good excuse for not playing at Miss Halsey's recital caused her to flush when she remembered the "fuss" she had made. When she had finished, she waited in a little trepidation for David to speak, but when he did all he said was, "Thank you, 'Licia," for which she was honestly thankful. Nevertheless she failed in most of her lessons the next day. She could play now; her fingers no longer became "tangled," was it fair to Miss Halsey who had spent so much time and patience, not to?

She went straight to the meadow that afternoon and sat down by the brook.

"Little brook," she said aloud, "oh, little brook, tell me! What ought I to do?"

The little brook gurgled an answer, but Alicia did not seem to find it very satisfactory.

The night of the recital came. At Miss Halsey's request, Alicia had promised that, even though she did not play, she would sit with the rest of the pupils. As she took her place one of them whispered:

"Hullo, 'Licia. I just love that 'Spring-y' thing you're going to play!" Alicia looked at her program quickly and read in amazement:

"Grieg's To Spring

Alicia Margaret Gordon."

"I can excuse you, you know, Alicia," Miss Halsey said in a low tone.

If Miss Halsey wished to excuse her, she might. Alicia settled herself to enjoy the recital. But she didn't enjoy it. It seemed to her she had never heard a set of pupils play so abominably. The mistakes they made set her teeth on edge! Plainly nearly all of them were suffering from stage-fright. That wasn't all: Miss

Halsey said she was sorry to have to announce that two of her pupils had been taken ill, one had been called away. Watching her, Alicia had a sudden feeling of guilt. She was so little, so disappointed, and yet she was trying to smile!

"Why," said Alicia to herself, "she's worked hardest of all, getting this thing up. Teaching us all, and seeing that all those compositions sound well together! Oh, how can they behave so? The quitters!"

But what about herself? She could play now. Her name was on the program. Was she going to add another disappointment?

"But you had a good excuse," she pleaded with herself.

"Yes," said Conscience, "but you haven't now. You know you can play."

"But after all I've said!" the little imp of stubbornness fenced.

"Coward!" said Conscience "quitter."

"But think of the teasing!" begged the little imp.

"Think of Miss Halsey. Look at her!"

Alicia looked. Then she looked at her program. It was her turn. Could she? The lights seemed to wobble, but in a minute she was in her place. For just a second terror gripped her. Then she struck the opening chords.

It was queer what happened then. Alicia wasn't in the concert-hall at all. She was in the meadow, by the willow tree just beginning to show its baby leaves, and the little brook winding its way in and out among the islands she and David and Bob had made. There were violets in the grass at her feet, and a blue, blue sky overhead. The south wind carried the blossoms to light on her hair and, down on a fence-post, so nearly out of sight that she could catch only a glimpse of his blue coat, was a bird that sang the loveliest song of all:

"The winter is over and gone. The time of the singing of birds has—come! .....has.....come!"

With the softest of notes the beautiful song of "Spring" ended.

For a moment there was absolute silence. Then something else began.

Alicia was almost frightened at first, and then she rose and bowed.

"Oh, my dear!" cried Miss Halsey softly as she came down the steps, "it was lovely! Thank you! Your brother David told me you would play, and I knew I could depend on your memory!"

"David said....." Alicia gasped in astonishment.

"Yes," nodded Miss Halsey, her eyes filled with pride, "he said you would."

"Oh," said Alicia.

She smiled a little sheepishly as her family came forward through the throng.

"My dear child!" cried Aunt Sophie. "We were so proud!" She clasped Alicia in her arms, "so very proud of—"

"Of the Quitter," said David, "Yes, we are!"

He smiled at his sister.

## The Blackbird in The City

BY VIVIAN T. POMEROY

(From *The Legends of Lumb Lane*, a volume of stories published in England. Sold by The Beacon Press, Boston.)

ONE Friday Toby came to see me. Toby is sixteen, and he calls me uncle. It began—the uncle-ing, I mean—when Toby was seven. So you see we've known each other a long time, although he isn't really my nephew. Toby is awfully clever. He's passed his "metric," and written a topping essay on "The Fantastic in Poetry"; but he isn't a prig. He has fought battles and shed blood of large and bullying boys. He plays football, and his knees are mighty; and he isn't afraid to hug you if he feels like it.

Toby lives in a grey manufacturing town and goes to the Grammar School. He's in the upper sixth. And just lately he's been having a bad time; that's what he came to tell me about.

Toby writes poetry. He has written a splendid poem for the school magazine, and the poem has won a prize—a much better poem than some by Mr. Longfellow, who made quite a name for himself. But I must get back to Toby. "You see, uncle," he said, his jolly blue eyes cloudy with trouble, "the chaps in the school seem to despise me for doing this stuff. They like me all right at football, but they detest poetry. They 'think there's something namby-pamby about poetry. I want to go on writing it; but it's no good doing it if people you want to like it *don't* like it. So I'm chucking poetry and going in for engineering." "Oh," I said, "Are the other chaps keen on that?" "Well, a good many of them are keen on girls," said Toby seriously; "it seems an engrossing pursuit. But I'm not keen on girls—not yet. I s'pose I shall be," Toby added hopefully and modestly. "Oh!" I said again. "Have you ever thought, Toby, that the sort of feeling that makes chaps in the sixth form interested in girls is what makes you keen on poetry?" "I—I dare say," said Toby. "Only," I said, "you look at the ideal; they want the real." "I wish the ideal and the real were one and the same," said Toby. "So do I," said I. "But stick to the ideal, Toby. Do what you feel you must do, and hang engineering and what other chaps think practical." "But how am I to be sure it's worth while?" said Toby.

"Out in that dirty garden, Toby," I said, pointing out of the window of my room, "is a large and ancient pear-tree. You know it well, having aforetime made your clean suits black unto despair in your explorations among the topmost boughs. You see the kind of garden it grows in—all hemmed in by little ugly houses. Far, far away from the country is our grimy garden. Well, every morning, soon after dawn, even a wet and windy dawn, I am awakened by the most delicious gurglings; by the most divine singing. A blackbird comes—heaven knows from what far place he comes!—and he whistles and whistles. I lie half



awake with the magic of that music all around. I can't tell you how wonderful it is. Why should he sing here in the town when there's all the green country round? Do you suppose he knows it's a hundred times sweeter to us here than to us in green mansions? Does he know what he means to us? I don't know; but I do know that his whistling makes a grey city garden magic in the early morning. See?"

"You mean," said Toby slowly, "I've got to do what's in me all the more because it's not expected nor usual in a manufacturing town."

"I do," I said. "We want all the blackbirds who are intrepid enough to sing in a sooty city."

"I see," said Toby. "But you *do* like the blackbird. They *don't* like my poetry. They'd like to shut my mouth."

"Underneath our tree, where the blackbird sings to the dawn, there sits Tom Halliwell, the next door cat," I said. "Patiently, patiently. He has no use for blackbirds' songs. He's killed many blackbirds. So there he sits; for he, too, gets up with the dawn. And always he watches, watches. He sees the trembling ripples in the blackbird's throat; and he longs to silence the song of that throat forever. But the blackbird perhaps sings all the more madly because danger lurks beneath him. It's an adventure to sing the dawn in, with a black cat below—waiting, hoping, longing to spring."

"I see," said Toby.

"Apologies for slight sermon!" I said. "Now, tea's coming in. Hot potato cakes, Toby—specially for you. And for me—toast, very buttery."

## Aunt Flora's Chat About The Wild Ginger

BY HARRIETTE WILBUR

"NO, it isn't too early to look for flowers," said Aunt Flora, one Saturday morning when the Ballou twins were eager to get out into the woods. "In fact, most people miss making friends with some of the earliest blooming plants because they don't go out looking for them soon enough."

So with a basket of lunch, rubbers, wraps, and flower-collecting tools, the three motored off to the woods, through a regular chorus of frog twitters and meadowlark yodels.

"Oh, it's such a nice morning, I'm sure some flowers must be awake," rejoiced Bessie.

"These frogs would wake them up,—they sound just like alarm clocks," joked Bobby, and he trilled loud and long, imitating one fling away in the roadside ditch.

They had been wandering about the woods over an hour before they came upon one of the strangest plants they had ever met. It was in a little rocky nook, where the soil in between the stones was rich and moist.

"Look, kiddies," Aunt Flora called to them, stopping beside a cluster of well-grown leaves. "Meet Wild Ginger."

"Wild Ginger! I can see it's wild enough, growing way off here. But where is the ginger?"

"In the root, Bobby. And that is only a ginger-like flavor."

"Are there enough of the plants around here so I can sample that root?" Bobby's lessons on the wild flowers had included the very valuable one of learning when it is safe to gather a plant and when better to leave it alone. Aunt Flora had warned them the true flower-lover leaves plants for others to enjoy; for other years, too.

"Well, we'll look around this part of the woods some before you start digging, Bobby. But I think it will be safe to remove one for your book." Aunt Flora told him.



"ONE OF THE PRETTIEST LEAVES IN THE WOODLAND, TOO."

So the three left their basket by the big poplar that helped shade the nook, and went strolling off in different directions.

"I've found some more! So have I! And I!" they began calling to each other, so all came back again.

When Bobby started to dig around the root, Aunt Flora told him to keep away from the tuft of leaves.

"Cut out wide as you can, because it is a good-sized rootstock Wild Ginger grows."

"Like a potato?" asked Bobby.

"Not so much like a potato as like a rhubarb root," said Aunt Flora.

Bessie was helping Bobby at his digging, holding the two long-stemmed, fan-shaped leaves out of the way.

They both sprang from the same place on the root, making a pretty green bouquet themselves.

"Aren't they a pretty shape," she exclaimed, spreading one out on her sleeve. "Why, I know what it is—it's a half-moon, almost."

"One of the prettiest leaves in the woodland, too," nodded Aunt Flora. "Notice the jaunty spring to it! The tip rolls

back, the bluntly rounded edges roll up and then over, so that the whole effect is very gay."

"They are thin, and fine as silk," added Bessie, smoothing the leaf gently with her hand. "And look what a pretty pattern the veins make, running out both sides from the middle rib."

"Say—what's this?" cried Bobby, and with the tip of his trowel blade he pointed to the oddest sort of bell snuggled right between the two fuzzy leaf-stalks.

"It is the blossom. Now you see another reason for calling it 'wild' ginger,—because the flower is so very shy!"

"Purple-brown, what an odd color for a blossom," exclaimed Bessie when she peered over at the drooping bell. "And too big for its stem, too."

Bessie was right. The dark bell-shaped cup grew at the end of a short stalk that rose right up between the two leaf-stems. But instead of standing up like a cup, it lay over like a bell, almost touching the ground. The rim was flared into three pointed ends, while a cluster of fine threads filled the throat.

"If we remember to look for it later in the summer, we may come upon the Wild Ginger in fruit," remarked Aunt Flora.

And as Bobby and Bessie found the spicy root good "chewing", they did remember to come back again. And on some of the plants they found round, fleshy pods filled with large, thick seeds. But only the root was good to eat. Yet Bessie said she'd always remember Wild Ginger for its odd blossom and pretty twin leaves.

## "Easter the First"

(Continued from p. 122)

"Tightwad" Hastings' grand-daughter, and heir to his vast western holdings. "New machinery, new cabins,—we'll be all dolled up! Evergreen's going to be on the map before that lady gets through!" predicted Trotter complacently.

Barbara was as radiant as if she had discovered Mrs. Crofton herself. She keenly anticipated the "personally conducted tour" they were to have together that week. "You see I was on my way east from California, and had an impulse to stop off and look things over," Mrs. Crofton had confided to Marian and Barbara. "The manager and his wife were kind enough to move into The Craggs to make it home-like for me. And now I'm so interested," her face was beautiful in its animation, "that all the queen's horses couldn't get rid of me! I shall stay indefinitely, and I shall greatly appreciate your help," she smiled knowingly at Barbara, "in a future campaign that is taking form in my brain."

Barbara solemnly shook hands, assuring her new friend of her entire co-operation and bargaining for Mrs. Crofton's aid in her own scheme. The following week was spent in a sort of house-to-house excursion, and the intuitive fears of the pair became sorrowful convictions.



"The whole camp is frozen up," Mrs. Crofton told Barbara regretfully. "In-different, cold, hopeless—no spirit. And what wonder when even Nature starves them?" she cried rebelliously. "Shut in here the year round, they've forgotten that warm love and throbbing life exist! We must help waken them, Barbara! Mexican, half-breed, Italian, Irish—they are America's own now, and here is my opportunity for service to my neighbor!"

"Do you mind if I give an Indian whoop?" Barbara burst into the school house that evening, glowing like a June rose. "Listen to this. A Sunday School right away with Mrs. Crofton for leader; everybody's homesick for it! Easter exercises with all of us working for dear life. An up to date community house in mid-camp next summer—isn't it wonderful? Oh yes, and Mrs. Crofton has a young doctor cousin who wants to locate in Colorado right away. She's going to get him up here for a while. That old Doctor's been so selfish and bossy he wouldn't go out nights, so he's discharged, and Mrs. Crofton's wired her Dr. Bob Merton to make tracks—"

"Wha-at?" gasped Marian, red as a peony. Barbara scented something interesting.

"You know him!" she accused. "I thought his name sounded familiar. When, where, and how?"

Marian seemed embarrassed but obviously pleased. "We've corresponded a little ever since we met in Glacier National," she admitted carelessly. Her determination to drag the subject back to Easter amused her sister vastly. "The children are wildly excited, but I'm using this new interest to spur them on in their work," Marian continued calmly. "No piece, no song, unless the three R's are toeing the mark."

"The men at the house promised to haul boards and kegs and make plenty of seats," Barbara was flitting about the room, disposing of the Easter audience in her mind's eye. Marian spoke apologetically as they started homeward in the dusk.

"I'm sorry I didn't think of it sooner, Bab, but as usual, I needed you to wind me up. I'm paying for those bulbs you ordered. The children are all agog over the enchanted onions I told them about. I want each of them to have a hyacinth or tulip for May Day, since they can't enjoy it at Easter."

"If I were only triplets!" wailed Barbara during those days that brimmed with joyous activity. "I can't give you all the 'perpendiculars,'" she wrote her mother. "But the whole camp is looking forward to the children's simple Easter program. It's an epoch-making event since it initiates a brand-new Sunday School, too. Big Globe Trotter is to be master of ceremonies, and is so excited you'd think he was to be presented at court! Mrs. Halloran's pressed his black suit, and he skirished around in his

belongings and dug out a white shirt, a checkerboard vest and a Bible his mother gave him last world! Indeed, we hear that many Bibles are being resurrected and dusted for the occasion. Dr. Bob, the jolliest chap, speaks of it as 'Easter the First,' and oh, mother, you should have seen Mrs. Halloran when he assured her little Timmie might be hale and hearty yet! After Easter Mrs. Crofton will take the laddeen down to the Children's Hospital where he will have all the care and advantages that money and medical skill can provide."

The day before Easter was auspiciously warm and sunny. Globe, with Juan and Antonio, took the day off, and made a trip to the forest below, returning with a load of fragrant spruce boughs and verdant vines, beside a precious handful of brave wee anemones which they presented to Barbara with as much ceremony as if their offering had been gold nuggets.

"Come right over and help decorate," Barbara urged happily. "It's so springified Dr. Bob is letting me take Timmie over in his cart."

It seemed eminently fitting that Timmie, ecstatic over his rare outing, should be the one to spy the harbinger of spring, that winged symbol of happiness—a bluebird!

"Never before have I laid eyes on 'em up here," declared Trotter, solemnly removing his cap as the rare visitor fluttered into a stunted pine near the school house, and treated the awed little company to a flute-like melody of cheer.

Antonio had previously presented "Teacher" with one of his autumn treasures, a cocoon firmly attached to an aspen twig. The children had kept watch for days, fearful lest the promised miracle might happen in their absence. "It's still napping," Barbara showed eager Timmie the mysterious thing. "You shall see it when the sunshine fairies break the spell." Softly the child hummed a bit of the song he had learned:

"Waken, sleeping butterflies, burst your narrow prison!  
Spread your golden wings and rise, for the Lord has risen!"

The school house overflowed that bright Easter morning, everyone resplendent in precious, almost forgotten, Sunday best. But who could think of his raiment or his neighbors' when all about blossomed lilies, like which even Solomon was never arrayed! Lilies and fragrant hyacinths, Mrs. Crofton's offering, wafted sweet incense and pictured the old story of renewed life and love and hope immortal.

Globe, stiff and unfamiliar in his newly acquired dignity that sat as oddly on the genial giant as his old suit, read the Resurrection chapter and Marian played the organ. Mrs. Halloran, ignoring tears that threatened her threadbare black silk, expected the roof to rise during the jubilant songs of the children. There were dainty Easter cards for every grown-up, and gay eggs for the little folks.

The two unplanned interruptions only made the exercises more thrilling and drew the smiling neighbors with a closer bond. Lily May, starched and be-rib-boned, had mounted the platform, made her bow and begun her piece, when the sympathetic audience saw her hesitate and flash a knowing glance at her anxious family. She explained naively to the entire camp, "Bubby came a-purpose to our Easter program!"

There was a ripple of amused surprise as all heads turned to see the cub, fore-paws resting on the window sill, a comical expression of good will and approval on his funny face. Nobody had the heart to drive him away, and even the children forgot him in the thrill of what occurred soon afterward. As if Nature, eager to atone for her tardy awakening, had timed her miracle to the moment, the cocoon cradle gave up its sleeping beauty. Again Life triumphed over apparent death. At Timmie's rapturous "Oh, looky!" awed eyes watched the gold-winged creature that fluttered slowly into the sunshine, and rested lightly on an Easter lily. Barbara's eyes were eloquent as they met Mrs. Crofton's misty ones.

"Aren't you glad we came?" they wire-lessly happily. Dr. Bob and Marian exchanged a smile that carried a similar message with perhaps a more personal significance. But it was Timmie who sounded the keynote of the overture of a new era in Evergreen. "We won't ever skip Easter after this, will we?" he appealed to his big chum, Trotter, as they made their way outdoors through groups of chatting neighbors. The big man swung his little pal gently to his shoulder.

"Not so you'd notice it," he assured Timmie drolly. "Now that we been interduced all round, and said, 'Pleased to meet ye, Easter,' course it wouldn't be good manners ever to slight her again, Timmie lad!"





## The Bush Tits' House-Raising

BY DOROTHY HANFORD WOODWARD

ONCE upon a time down in the southern part of sunny California, two tiny grayish brown birds, called bush tits, decided to build a nest in a big old oak tree in the prettiest garden. Now these two little bush tits had been traveling all over the country with a great many other bush tits, so they were rather tired and wanted to settle down for a while.

Papa Bush Tit said to Mamma Bush Tit, "It is high time we began building a house for us to live in. But I don't know how we will ever get it finished alone so that we can move in this spring." You see, the bush tits always build such an elaborate house, that they have to help each other in building.

Well, Mamma Bush Tit flirted her tail and chattered to herself, just like a chickadee, and said: "I tell you what we can do. We shall invite our friends, the other bush tits to help us."

So they sent out an invitation to the other bush tits to meet with them in this old oak tree, and when they had all come Papa Bush Tit said, "Friends, my wife and I are tired of flying around and want a home, and we would like to have you help us build it. We know you all are such fine builders."

Well, these other bush tits were so highly complimented that they were quite excited to begin work, and they hopped around on the branches and chattered so hard, that all the people in the neighborhood, thought the birds were having a bad fight. Wasn't that funny? That was because those poor people did not understand the bush tit language.

They all soon set out to gather the materials to be used, while Papa and Mamma decided what branch their new home was to be built on. You see that is a very important question to be settled, because if the branch does not swing enough, it will jerk or jar the babies too much in the time of storms.

After the Papa and Mamma Bush-tits had selected the branch, they all set to work at once to weave the moss, grass, bits of cotton from the milk weed pods, and the little sticks into a regular hanging basket. The little sticks were placed in the nest and the other materials fastened in and around them so that the new home would be that much stronger. And so they went on gathering these pieces of moss, grass, sticks and leaves, and weaving them until that nest or bird home was ten or eleven inches long. They had even made a doorway into the house just a little below the branch, so that they could use the branch for their front door step and front porch.

After the bush tits had finished the outside walls, they began to put the lining inside the house. Here they had the hardest part to do, and the neighbors could not help in this work as there was not room enough for so many to work in. This lining had to be made of spiders'



## Good Giants

BY MAE NORTON MORRIS

THE little dog that cannot talk,  
Except to say, Bow Wow,  
And the tiny kitty that lives next door,  
And can only say, Meow,  
They think that you and I are Giants,  
We are so big and tall—  
But if they find we're always kind,  
They won't be afraid at all.

webs, and very very soft, downy feathers. Just think of all the feathers and spiders' webs those little birds had to gather to line their house. Why do you suppose the lining of this house had to be so soft?

Well I shall tell you why. When the baby birds are hatched, they are so tiny, and their skins are so very tender, that their nest must be soft so that the babies will come to no harm. Well it took several days before those bush tits finished their nest, and it was not long after this that there were two, tiny, featherless babies there for Papa and Mamma to feed, —and such a time to feed them too! Those poor parents had to work hard because the babies were hungry all the time they were awake. Papa and Mamma finally had to divide up the time and each would take food home for ten minutes at a time while the other one rested. And so, Papa and Mamma Bush Tit worked hard day after day to feed their little family and the harder they had to work the better they loved their babies. Isn't that just like our fathers and mothers?

## Heart-of-a-Poet And Hard Luck

BY HEWES LANCASTER

AS Heart-of-a-Poet turned out of the big white road to take the short cut home he thought he heard some one grunting and groaning as though he were trying to carry a load that was too big for him.

"Hello!" called Heart-of-a-Poet, "Where are you? Can't I help you carry your load?"

"Help me carry my load!" cried a voice from the thicket, "wait a minute and let me have a look at you, will you?"

Heart-of-a-Poet waited and pretty soon a bent old man came stumbling into the road. The load on his shoulders seemed to be nearly five times as big as he was and he puffed and panted with every step he took.

"My word," cried Heart-of-a-Poet, "who are you?"

The bent old man peered up at him with keen bright eyes:—

"Never mind who I am," he said, "just please tell me who you are. In all the long, long years that I have walked with men you are the first person that ever offered to help me carry my load. Do tell me your name so that I may write it down where nobody can rub it out."

"Why—my name is Heart-of-a-Poet. What's yours?"

"Your name is Heart-of-a-Poet," cried the bent old man. "That's it. I've heard about you. You are the chap that goes around asking people to tell you their stories."

Heart-of-a-Poet laughed:

"I guess that's who I am. And I wish you would tell me your story. Can't you put your load down and rest a little while?"

"No, I can't put my load down, not ever. It's fastened on."

"That's a shame," cried Heart-of-a-Poet. "Who fastened it on you?"

"Oh, first one person and then another. You see my name is Hard Luck, and instead of people bearing their own blame they come and fasten it on me. Read the name of some of those bundles on my back and you will see I am telling you the truth."

Heart-of-a-Poet bent over the load on Hard Luck's back and read the name of the top bundle. It read:—

"Blame for John being late at school."

"That's it?" grunted Hard Luck. "John stopped to look at Harry's rabbits and got to talking. Then when he was late for school he said Hard Luck was to blame for it and came and fastened the blame on me. I already had enough to carry because Mary had tried to crawl through a hole in the fence and tore her new dress, and fastened the blame on me. Tom had read a storybook instead of working his problems and when he was kept in at school he said Hard Luck got him into trouble. He fastened all that blame on me and I tell you it was a heavy blame too"

"Hold on a minute," Heart-of-a-Poet cried, "It wasn't your fault that John was late, or Mary tore her dress, or Tom got punished."

"I know it wasn't my fault," Hard Luck grunted, "but that is the way people do. They let themselves be lazy or careless and then when they get blamed for it they just bundle the blame up and fasten it on my back, and I have to carry it. I tell you, Heart-of-a-Poet I don't think it's fair."





## THE BEACON CLUB

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

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13 UNION STREET,  
NEWBURYPORT, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck:—I would like to join your Club very much. I go to the Unitarian Chapel. My teacher's name is Mrs. Roy. We have *Beacons* every Sunday. I think they are very interesting. I have my gold Sunday-school pin and I am very proud of it. We have a small club of our own called "The Sunnyside Club." We are making scrapbooks for the hospitals of Newburyport. I am President. I am twelve years of age and in the seventh grade of the Jackman School. I would like to have some one about my own age to correspond with.

Yours very truly,

LOUISE MARSHALL.

NORMANDIE APARTMENTS,  
NINTH AND UNIVERSITY STS.,  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

Dear Miss Buck:—I've been reading *The Beacon* and I like it very much. I go to the Unitarian Church. I'd like to belong to the Beacon Club. I am eight years old. My grandmother lives in Massachusetts, and so does my aunt and uncle and my cousin.

Sincerely yours,

FRANK BOOTH.

"Of course it isn't fair," Heart-of-a-Poet told him. "I never thought much about it before but now I remember I have heard people laying the blame on Hard Luck when they should have been laying the blame on themselves."

"Yes! But people just won't lay the blame on themselves. You will find plenty of boys brave enough to ride and swim and fight but you don't often find one brave enough to bear his own blame. No sir! He'll take that and fasten it on Hard Luck. Girls are just the same way. Where you find one brave enough to say:—

"That's my blame. I'll carry it." You will find hundreds that say—

"It's all Hard Luck's fault."

And fasten the blame on me.

"Poor old chap," said Heart-of-a-Poet, "no wonder your back is almost broken. I am going to tell the boys and girls about this big load you have to carry and I am going to tell them it's a shame for them to fasten all their blame on you."

"That's a real good idea," grunted Hard Luck. "I have heard that all the boys and girls like to listen to you. Maybe if you talk to them they'd come take some of this blame off my back."

"All right," Heart-of-a-Poet cried, "I'll go talk to them right now."

### Church School News

FROM a report given in this column of what was being done in our school at Canton, Mass., and after a conference with Mr. Elliot C. French, the superintendent, Mr. Frederick H. Hunter, superintendent of the First Parish School

In March, 1917, we printed a letter from a boy living in Mattapan, Mass., who walked two miles every Sunday to attend the Unitarian church and Sunday school in Hyde Park. In that letter he said, "Whoever else is or is not a Unitarian, I am going to stick for the Unitarians as long as I live." That boy is now a young man living in Sapulpa, Okla., and it is good to see from the following letter that he is still "sticking for the Unitarians":

R. R. No. 1, Box 172A,

SAPULPA, OKLA.

Dear Miss Buck:—I am a member of the Beacon Club but I have lost my pin and I am enclosing five cents in stamps for a new one. I came from Hyde Park, Mass., three years ago. There is not any Unitarian church in Sapulpa, but I take *The Beacon* and I happened to see about a church in Tulsa, so I have started to go there. I ride horseback seven miles to Sapulpa and then go up to Tulsa on an interurban car which runs between the two cities.

Yours truly,

DONALD ANDERSON.

New members in Massachusetts are Vera E. Stone, Berlin; Carrie Gregson and Juanita Mae Chickering, Brookfield; Edith Kettendorf and W. Lincoln Burt, Jr., Canton; Anne D. Crocker, Hingham; Harry Godden, Jr., Jamaica Plain; Alice and Nellie Gibby, Marlboro; Marion Lithgow, Melrose; Marion Henderson, North Easton; Betty Merrill, Peabody; Beatrice Fisher, Winthrop.

in West Roxbury, Mass., has worked out a system of monthly reports to be made to the parents of the children in the school. The first of these reports was accompanied by a letter to the home. Mr. Hunter says—"I anticipate good results from the reports, not so much for the record of grades and deportment as from keeping the parents in touch with the work of the school and having them realize that their children are really missing something if they are absent."

One happy result of the preaching mission recently held in Wilmington, Del., is increased interest on the part of members of the church in the church school, of which Mrs. William Bradford is now superintendent. The school meets at 10 a. m. Through the co-operation of the Woman's Alliance, an excellent kindergarten is employed who not only directs the work of the younger children during the period of the church-school session, but entertains for a second hour the children of parents who wish to attend the morning service. A Church School Club has been organized which meets on the second Friday of each month for entertainment and to plan for work. One of its activities has been the supplying of milk to a needy family for more than a year; baskets of food have also been sent at intervals. These young people are to give the Sir Galahad pageant at Easter.

### Easter

BY ISLA PASCHAL RICHARDSON

NEW hope and lilies and sunshine,  
Peace, and the hush of prayer,  
Purity banishing evil—  
Love's presence everywhere.

## RECREATION CORNER.

### ENIGMA LVI.

I am composed of 16 letters.

My 7, 6, 9, is a male.

My 14, 6, 15, 16, is a direction.

My 12, 8, 5, is a mineral.

My 2, 3, 6, 13, 16, is a part of the body.

My 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, is to throw.

My 11, 14, 6, 15, 1, is a banquet.

My *whole* is the title of a book.

W. T. & H. W.

### ENIGMA LVII

I am composed of 19 letters.

My 12, 7, 8, is a policeman.

My 17, 3, 15, 5, 9, is a toilet necessity.

My 1, 2, 18, 16, is a particular friend.

My 6, 13, is a preposition.

My 10, 11, 3, is to make a mistake.

My 14, 4, 19, 8, is an impediment of speech.

My *whole* is a noted Italian.

WARREN WITHERELL.

### ENIGMA LVIII

I am composed of 11 letters.

My 5, 6, 8, 4, 10, is what you do in school.

My 7, 11, is a personal pronoun.

My 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 6, is to rush upon someone.

My *whole* is a famous French king.

MARGERY ROBINSON.

### BEHEADINGS

1. Behead not fresh and leave a story.
2. Behead a grain and leave warmth. Behead again and leave to consume a palatable substance. Behead again and leave a preposition.
3. Behead an emotion and leave a girl's name. Behead again and leave vermin. Behead again and leave a congealed substance.
4. Behead a filmy substance and leave one.
5. Behead an article of furniture and leave a head covering. Behead again and leave a gas.

EDITH WITHERELL.

### CHARADE

When I got on the car, "You must *first*" said a man.

"*First second*" my landlord remarked as I ran To catch up with my *whole* who was waiting for me

With a *second* in his coat which was shocking to see.

P. R. HAZARD.

### ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 27

ENIGMA LII.—Theodore Roosevelt.

ENIGMA LIII.—Table croquet.

A GEOGRAPHICAL PUZZLE.—Two brothers, *Henry* and *Charles*, and their sisters, *May* and *Ann*, went on a picnic to the woods. *May* wore a red dress and *Ann* had on her white dress and her ring with the yellow stone.

They carried for their lunch a sandwich, made of turkey, a frankfurter, an orange apiece and also a bottle of milk to drink.

While they were eating their lunch on a little rock, they saw a snake in the grass, which *Charles* beat until it was dead. It began to grow chilly so they decided to say *farewell* to the woods. They all voted that they had a nice time.

TRANSPOSITIONS.—1. Ruth, hurt. 2. Sore, rose. 3. North, thorn. 4. Cafe, face. 5. Part, trap.

## THE BEACON

REV. FLORENCE BUCK, EDITOR.

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